2025

AP® World History: Modern

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

Inside:

Short-Answer Question 3

- ☑ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ☑ **Student Samples**
- ☑ **Scoring Commentary**

© 2025 College Board. College Board, Advanced Placement, AP, AP Central, and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of College Board. Visit College Board on the web: collegeboard.org.

AP Central is the official online home for the AP Program: apcentral.collegeboard.org.

Question 3: Short Answer No Stimulus — 3 points

General Scoring Notes

- Each point is earned independently.
- **Accuracy:** These scoring guidelines require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam responses should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.
- **Describe:** Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic. Description requires more than simply mentioning an isolated term.
- **Explain:** Provide information about how or why a historical development or process occurs or how or why a relationship exists.

A — Identify one technological or military factor that contributed to the expansion of Muslim empires such as the Ottoman, Safavid, or Mughal Empires during the period circa 1300 to 1600. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Gunpowder weapons (like cannons) contributed to the expansion of Muslim empires.
- Increasing centralization of the military, including standing armies, helped Muslim empires expand during the period circa 1300 to 1600.
- New military and bureaucratic recruitment methods, such as the Janissaries, helped Muslim empires like the Ottomans expand.

B — Explain one way that Muslim rulers during the period circa 1300 to 1600 used economic policies to generate revenue for their states or empires. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Many Muslim rulers addressed the financial needs of their expanding empires by adopting various policies of tax-farming to increase revenues and ensure that tax revenues were collected.
- Some Muslim rulers used tribute collection as a means for both increasing revenue and controlling vassal states that had been defeated but not incorporated.
- Many Muslim rulers used innovative tax policies, including appointing tax officials (Mughal zamindars) or allowing local community leaders to collect the taxes for their entire community or locale. In other instances, Muslim rulers monetized taxes that had previously been collected in kind.

C — Explain one reason why some Muslim rulers during the period circa 1300 to 1600 adopted tolerant policies toward religious or ethnic minorities in their states or empires. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

© 2025 College Board

- Some Muslim rulers adopted policies of tolerance towards religious minorities in their empires because it incited fewer revolts, which also helped establish the legitimacy of the rulers.
- Muslim rulers wanted to utilize the economic contributions of their minority populations, for example the *jiziya* taxes paid by non-Muslims, or the luxury goods traded by Greek, Armenian, or Jewish merchants.
- Muslim rulers wanted to utilize the military contributions of their minority populations, as seen, for example, in the Mughal use of Hindu Rajput warrior groups, or in the Ottoman use of Janissary troops recruited from its Christian minority groups.
- Muslim rulers wanted to utilize the political contributions of their minority groups, as seen in the Ottoman sultans' use of prominent members of the Greek community in the empire as provincial governors, or the Mughal emperors' use of Hindu political advisors and ministers.

© 2025 College Board

A. One military factor that contributed to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire was the win of Constantinople. By using gunpowder weapons, and having a strong army, the empire was able to defeat Constantinople, which was extremely significant because was the opening to Europe. By defeating them, they were able to expand into Europe.
B. One way that Muslim rulers during the period 1300 to 1600 used economic policies to generate revenue for their empires was through taxation systems. Systems like tax farming in the Ottoman Empire and the system in the Mughal Empire allowed for these Empires to be able to tax their subjects without actually having the emperor do it themselves. With tax farming, whoever won a bid was to collect the taxes of that area, and the reason theyd want to do it is becuase they could impose more than the actual tax and keep the rest for themselves. With the system in the Mughal empire, the local leaders were the ones who would collect taxes, ultimately for the empire. This created an effective way to collect the revenue, and was significant as it kept the empire stable.
C. One reason why some Muslim rulers during the period circa 1300 to 1600 adopted tolerant policies toward religious minorities in their empires was so they could earn respect, generate power, and keep the peace. For example, the Ottoman Empire implemented the millet system in which religions and ethnicities were subjected to their own "millet", but they stayed loyal to the empire. This created a sense of connection and loyalty and respect, as these ethnicities and religion sects were thankful as they were able to live the way they wanted. This created a sense of peace, where there weren't tensions. This kept power in the hand of the emperor, and kept the people happy.

One technological and military factor that contributed to the expansion of Muslim empires circa 1300-1600 was the use of Gunpowder. The use of gunpowder allowed for more effecient military expansion. The use of gunpowder allowed for these empires to fight off many other states very quickely especially if those states weren't improving their technology. The use of gunpowder allowed for large military expansions such as those in the Ottoman empire as it allowed them to control and dominate land easier.

One way Muslim rulers during the period circa 1300-1600 used economic policies to generate revenue was through Muslim merchants. Many of these empires held important resources that other countries wanted, in which they used merchants to trade. Using trading routes such as the Silk Roads, Maritime trading, or the Sand roads, allowed for Muslim merchants to trade with others in which they brought wealth back to the empire to gain power and prosperity within their empires.

One reason why some Muslim rulers during the period circa 1300-1600 allowed religious tolerance was in hopes to expand their society. Many Muslim empires strived to build a large society and with the difference in religious groups they had to tolerate differences. Without tolerating differences they would be at risk of more internal conflicts with the government or result in people leaving their empires.

A. A major factor that contributed to the expansion of the Muslim empires was gun powder. Gun powder played a major role in conquering many different countries and civilizations in the middle east in Africa due to the Muslims having a huge technological advantage with guns compared to old weapons being used such as spears, swords, and shields that the natives were utilizing.
B. One way the Muslims rulers used economic policies to generate massive amounts of revenue was the creation of caravans which escorted and boosted the trade along the region while keeping the cargo protected from theifs. Along with also adopting tolerant policies to the native religious minorities. This allowed for the nation to be somewhat unified and increased the syncretism of the religions, which allowed for markets and trade to grow between the different ethnic groups.
C. Many Muslims rulers adopted tolerant policies towards other ethnic groups due to the caste system. For example, the Ottoman ruler Akbar was very lineant to other religions such as Hinduism and Sikhism because the caste system prohibited different social classes from communicating, therefore, the different social classes caused no commotions for the Muslim leaders because they couldn't come together to form and sort of resistance to the Muslims.

Short Answer Question 3

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses* on AP Central.

Sample: 3A
SAQ Part A Score: 1
SAQ Part B Score: 1
SAQ Part C Score: 1

Total Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for Part A because it identifies gunpowder as a technological factor that contributed to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, in particular to the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.

The response earned 1 point for Part B because it explains how tax farming enabled the rulers of the Ottoman Empire and the Mughal Empire to collect revenue "without actually having the emperor do it themselves." The response provides accurate descriptions of the basics of Ottoman tax farming and the functions of the zamindars in the Mughal Empire.

The response earned 1 point for Part C because it explains that the reason Muslim rulers implemented tolerant policies was "so they could earn respect, generate power, and keep the peace." The response expands on this statement by offering a detailed explanation of the Ottoman Empire millet system and the way it "created a sense of connection and loyalty and respect, as these ethnicities and religion sects were thankful as they were able to live the way they wanted."

Sample: 3B
SAQ Part A Score: 1
SAQ Part B Score: 0
SAQ Part C Score: 1

Total Score: 2

The response earned 1 point for Part A because it identifies gunpowder as a technological factor that contributed to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Although the response does not go on to list specific Ottoman conquests that were enabled by the use of gunpowder, identifying the technology was enough to earn the point.

The response did not earn the point for Part B. The response discusses the activities of Muslim merchants and makes the vague claim that "they brought wealth back to the empire to gain power and prosperity," but it does not explain how Muslim rulers used merchants or what policies rulers adopted toward merchants.

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org.**

Short Answer Question 3 (continued)

The response earned 1 point for Part C because it explains that the religious diversity of Muslim empires made adopting policies of religious toleration necessary. The response states that "with the difference in religious groups they had to tolerate differences. Without tolerating differences they would be at risk of more internal conflicts."

Sample: 3C
SAQ Part A Score: 1
SAQ Part B Score: 0
SAQ Part C Score: 0

Total Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for Part A because it identifies gunpowder as a technological factor that contributed to the expansion of Muslim empires. The response states that Muslims had "a huge technological advantage with guns compared to old weapons being used such as spears, swords, and shields." While this statement was not linked to a specific time and place the identification of gunpowder technology was enough to earn the point.

The response did not earn the point for Part B. The response to Part B discusses caravan trade, religious tolerance, and religious syncretism, but none of those are connected to economic policies adopted by Muslim rulers.

The response did not earn the point for Part C. The response does discuss the Mughal emperor Akbar (whom the response misidentifies as an Ottoman ruler) and outlines the basics of Akbar's religious tolerance towards Hindus and Sikhs but the response's explanation of why Akbar adopted policies of religious toleration ("because the caste system prohibited different social classes from communicating, therefore, the different social classes caused no commotions for the Muslim leaders because they couldn't come together to form and sort of resistance to the Muslims") is confusing and, at best, explains why Hindus could not unite to resist Mughal rule, not why the Mughals chose to adopt tolerant policies.

© 2025 College Board.
Visit College Board on the web: **collegeboard.org.**